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of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

An example of the working of the joint family can be given from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

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be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple and one child, the dependent members of the household usually have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

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point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

There is one other potential arrangement by which men without much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

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born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *asék*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister.

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v

It sometimes happens that after *asék* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *asék*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *asék*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself.

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Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable

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my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

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●597 presents are called '.the price of milk '. For the child of a stranger besides these presents must be given a big pig, a load of *chi* and two big baskets of rice and pop-corn ; the giving of these presents is equated with the giving of betrothal presents and both are called by the same word, *asék* : in the adopting *asék* however no *bek-bu* is required ; the adopting father takes the presents himself and brings the child away with him. In the case of a destitute orphan no ceremonial presents are given ; the child is merely fed and housed in exchange for his labour ; if there are no other direct heirs and if the child does not quarrel with his adopting parents he will normally inherit the property. Formally adopted children are treated in every way as the real heirs of their parents. It is permissible to adopt a child at any age between weaning and marriage ; the most usual age is between three and seven.

Two reasons are given for adopting a child : to have the benefit of the child's labour, and to have an heir and a support in old age. The first reason is much stressed ; almost as soon as children acquire physical independence they do a number of chores about the house, which increase with their age and strength ; for example, fetching wood and water and helping their elders by fetching tools and preparing simple implements for work. On the whole people only adopt children after many years of marriage.

The health of the child is the only consideration when adoption is considered ; up till marriage good or bad looks are not regarded. The child will be allowed to return to its real parents from time to time ; if the adopting parents and the adopted child get on really badly the child may be returned with a present of a big copper pot ; but if the child runs away because it is unhappy it will be sent back by its parents. There is no supposed emotional relationship between the adopting parents and adopted child ; if they are treated well the children will love them ; if not, not. For example, Atyook says that he loves his adopting parents better than his real ones ; Kurma detested his and though he has now left them for twenty years he still bears a grudge against them. For the adults concerned adoption is generally a matter of convenience ; a man with a large family (a son will only be given away if there are at least two others at home) places a son without expense to himself and assures his future ; the adopters get a general servant and a support in their old age. Adopting parents naturally pay all the marriage expenses of their adopted son.

Very occasionally a girl is adopted ; there was one case of this

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in the village. Chelim, who was himself adopted and who has in turn adopted a young boy, has also adopted the daughter of his younger brother (this brother who lives in another village has six daughters and no sons). This is done to get the services of a child; the adopting parents also get the marriage payments.

It is generally considered that the parents of large families do well by their children in giving them to childless relations to bring up as their heirs; it is considered though rather deplorable to give one's child to complete strangers or to people quite unrelated. For the adopted children however the situation appears to be unpleasant and emotionally complicated; children are seldom given away before the age of about four, by which time the patterns of affection within the biological family have been firmly established; consequently there is a considerable emotional struggle, and in nearly all the histories of adopted children that I obtained there are frequent stories of running home to the real parents, and of being beaten and sent back. An adopted child is lonely; adults do not normally talk to or play with children once they have achieved physical independence; and the isolation of Lepcha houses renders contact with neighbouring children, if there are any, slight and intermittent. It seems also (though with so few cases it is difficult to generalise) that the adopting parents have a tendency to make the child work harder than the real parents would do. Adopting parents are generally considerably older than the biological parents—adoption before the age of forty is uncommon—and more set in their ways; and the child has no companions to share his labours with him and lessen them with play. Adopted children appeared rather silent and awkward; they were more sullen than those children who lived with a group of siblings, and, unlike only children, neither demanded nor received attention from adults. After weaning normal Lepcha children habitually depend more on their elder siblings than on their parents; there seems to me to be a tendency to identify with elder siblings rather than with parents (owing to the extension of family terms and groupings a couple's first child is still likely to have 'elder siblings') and to participate, through this identification, in their emotional and sexual life. This phase of development is lost for adopted children; also they usually have not witnessed childbirth—children are normally always present at subsequent births in the household—and they appear to develop a complex of emotions around facts which are very simply accepted by the vast majority of children. Of the six adults who were

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adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Takneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two, the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

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845 or murderer. Marks with no definite significance show that the expectant parents had daubed their bodies or faces with paint.

Multiple births are excessively rare. There is one case of girl triplets being born in the neighbourhood, but none of them survived the age of three months. Twins are also very uncommon; twins of the same sex are considered lucky; if they are disparate it is lucky if the girl is born first; should the boy be born first it is bad and the children will die young. It is a cultural axiom that it is desirable for the first child to be a girl as she will be more help to the mother with subsequent children. But this axiom presupposes large families which are now uncommon; and many people have said to me that, though most people would prefer their first child to be a girl, they personally would prefer a boy, so as to be certain of having an heir, and somebody to live with them and look after them in their old age. It is also a cultural axiom that a father is more pleased at the birth of a daughter, and the mother at the birth of a son, and it is expected that parents will prefer their children of the opposite sex, but this is by no means always borne out in practice.

A still-born infant will be immediately taken down to the river by two or three friends of the parents; a Mun will prepare a bunch of stinging and prickly plants and will wait for the carriers to return, so that he can *pék* them some way away from the house. In such a case the mother's milk will be expelled on to a hot stone to dry up the flow; she cannot nurse other babies as her milk would be harmful for them.

Still-born babies and infants reincarnate immediately as the devil Ing-bong *moong*, and in this guise try to kill other children by giving them infantile diarrhoea. Ing-bong *moong* takes the form of a 'small wind' (probably a dust devil) and makes a noise first like a bird and then like a child. If two people together come across one they can dispose of it in the following way; one will chase the 'small wind' towards the other who will hack it with his knife when it arrives. If on the morrow a dead insect is found at the spot where the wind was it is a sign that the devil is dead.

• 597 853 Should the mother die in child-birth, there is considered to be little hope of saving the child, unless there happens to be a nearly related woman willing and able to nurse the baby. If the baby is three weeks old or over when its mother dies it may be reared on cows' milk; this is given in a cup through the stem of a plant which, when the outer bark is removed, resembles an indiarubber teat.

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Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

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to monologue, to recount anecdotes, to illustrate a theme by their own past experiences. I soon noticed that Kurma had a particular tendency to do this, and also that he was flattered by my obvious interest in what he had to say. After we had been in fairly continuous contact for about a month I asked him to tell me what he remembered of his childhood. He did so willingly, and thereafter it was easy to bring him back to the subject of his own past life by asking a single leading question. 'What happened after you did so-and-so?' 'What happened to so-and-so?' While he was telling his story I asked practically no questions at all; I kept all queries for subsequent meetings when impersonal subjects would be discussed, when I would interject them without apparent emphasis. Altogether about six full days were passed mainly in the discussion of Kurma's own life; I should undoubtedly have had more material if he had not first been summoned to visit his parents-in-law and on his return been taken ill with fever. Besides these special sessions Kurma would often introduce apposite anecdotes of his own past life, both before and after I had started getting his story.

With Kurma, more than with any other individual in Lingthem we managed to set up a pattern of mutual obligations. As *gyapön* he had been charged by the Mandal to look after us, especially in the matter of getting provisions; he enjoyed the reflected importance of his contact with Europeans, and I flattered him by appealing to him somewhat more often than was necessary. He was anyhow more disposed to talk than to work and was very amenable to cajolery.

I did not like Kurma very much and had not very full confidence in him. I repeatedly tried to trip him up by asking him identical questions at considerable intervals of time, and to check up on him by questioning other people. Actually my distrust was practically unfounded; only on one major point—the death of Banyok—did I find him completely incorrect, and at a later date he voluntarily retracted his first version.

Both through temperament and circumstances Kurma was an a-typical Lepcha. In temperament he had an unusual desire for power, was boastful, and had decided sadistic traits. Sociotically he was unfortunately circumstanced and his treatment of his circumstances was unusual. His mother appears to have been exceptionally poor and his adopting parents exceptionally unkind. Adoption is of itself statistically rare—only eleven people out of the 176 in

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Lingthem were or had been adopted; and Kurma is unique in having completely abandoned his adopting parents to return to his biological parents. Again as a person with two elder brothers Kurma is unusual in having become head of the household at an early age and in having had the heavy economic burden of seven funerals in a fairly short stretch of time.[4] He is also unusual in having started with an irregular sexual union, and extremely unfortunate in the mortality of his wives.

Nevertheless, despite his unusual character and circumstances, I believe that Kurma's life-story, incomplete though it is, gives a good illustration of the dynamic workings of Lepcha culture and an adequate cross-section view of Lepcha society. By developing the themes which he touches on,[5] sometimes very cursorily, one would have an almost complete picture of Lepcha social arrangements; if it were not for the awkwardness of such an arrangement, all the preceding chapters of this book could be used as amplification for Kurma's story.

I am giving the notes in the form in which I took them. The portions in quotation marks are nearly *verbatim* transcriptions; I could not, however, always write quickly enough to take down every word, and I have omitted the repetitions which swell out all Lepcha stories. The portions told in the third person are chiefly incidents which cropped up in the discussion of other matters.

Although I have not altered the notes in any way I am presenting them in more or less historical order, which is not that in which the information was given to me. To simplify reading I am giving cross-headings, and a few explanatory notes. For those points in his narrative on which I questioned other people and on which their versions differed considerably from Kurma's I have presented the alternative versions in brackets and italics. For ease of reference I am also giving overleaf a calendar of the more or less well-established dates in Kurma's life and the names and dates of birth and death of his immediate family. To bring his story up to date I have put after his narrative a journal of his doings during the period when I was observing him.

[4] The only people in Lingthem similarly circumstanced were Nariya and Rigya, and they were economically far better able to stand the strain.

[5] I have omitted in the following pages all the impersonal material (ceremonies, etc.) which Kurma incorporated in his story.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

* * * * *

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
● [597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212] be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the